

1507/982

Christian Exhortation

TO THE P E O P L E.

IN travelling along through this my native land on a religious visit, it has been my lot to be at divers places at the times when fairs were held; when my mind has been so concerned, that I could hardly be easy without going through the fair, and bearing a publick testimony against the folly, vain amusements, and ungodly practices that I beheld at these fairs, among the rest, by a number of persons going about the country exhibiting shews.

Oh! the concern of mind that I felt in not only beholding, but being brought to be deeply sensible of the consequences of all such vain amusements and
ungodly

ungodly practices, and their effects on the poor souls of all such who give up their hearts and minds to follow them, if not timely prevented by unfeigned repentance and amendment of life.

I have had with grief and sorrow of mind to observe, that those persons who go about the country with their vain shews, unhappily draw the minds and affections of the people, especially the poor unstable youth (whose inclinations are too readily and easily taken therewith) to spend their precious time and their money, too often corrupting and debasing their morals, to the great hurt of both body and soul.

Whatever any one may plead or say on behalf of these vain pastimes and recreations, I would have all such who have any regard for their well-being, either here or hereafter, seriously and solidly to consider this saying in the holy scripture, that "those who live
" in pleasures are dead whilst they live."
Which is to be understood of such who give way to these sensual gratifications called in scripture, "the lust of the
" eye,



“eye, the lust of the flesh, and the
 “pride of life,” which are not of the
 Father, but of the world that lies in
 wickedness, and are the works of dark-
 ness, that ought to be reprovèd.

Oh! that all who profess themselves
 to be the followers of Christ would se-
 riously consider, whereunto we were
 called: see 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22, 23. a glo-
 rious pattern of self-denial. Christ also
 said, “Learn of me, for I am meek
 “and lowly in heart, and ye shall find
 “rest to your souls.” “Thou shalt
 “love the Lord thy God with all thine
 “heart, with all thy soul, with all thy
 “strength, and with all thy mind, and thy
 “neighbour as thyself. “Love works
 “no evil to his neighbour: therefore,
 “love is the fulfilling of the law.”

How full and comprehensive are these
 expressions, were they but duly regarded
 by mankind in general; for if we love
 God as we ought to do, how can we
 give way to folly, vanity, or ungodli-
 ness? A true demonstration of our love
 to God is our obedience to his com-
 mandments. “If ye love me, keep my
 “command-

“ commandments. Ye are my friends
 “ if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

If therefore we are sincerely desirous to be his humble and faithful followers, we must take up our daily cross, and deny ourselves of all those vain practices which I have already mentioned; for they are a shame and a reproach to the Christian name.

I also further remark to those who have undertaken to promise and vow for others, that “ they shall renounce
 “ the devil and all his works, the
 “ pomps and vanities of this wicked
 “ world, and all the sinful lusts of the
 “ flesh, and keep God’s holy will and
 “ commandments, and walk in the same
 “ all the days of their lives;” that you would seriously consider the promises and vows that you have made for others, and which have been made for you. And what is God’s holy will concerning you and all mankind? It is our sanctification and redemption. Oh! how many remain strangers to this blessed state; not so much as being redeemed from a vain conversation, not having
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given up their hearts to the sanctifying operations of his holy spirit, nor experienced the redeeming virtue of Christ's blood to cleanse and purify them from all sin, as the primitive Christians did experience, as you may read in the scriptures of truth: "In whom," to wit, in Christ, said his followers, "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. i. 14.

In love therefore to your souls do I here beseech you, to give up your hearts to the pure operations of his holy spirit, that you may be brought to a state of true repentance and reconciliation with God, according to the exhortation in scripture: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts iii. 19.

How many are the offers of God's love to our souls, in order to draw our affections to himself, as it was formerly. How often, says the dear Son of God,

God, would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but you would not ; therefore the things that belong to your peace are hid from your eyes. A deplorable sentence indeed !

Therefore, for the Lord's sake, and your poor soul's sake, turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart ; amend your ways and your doings ; no longer give way to folly and vanity, but repent sincerely, and the Lord will receive you into the arms of his mercy, will abundantly pardon your transgressions, and remember your iniquities no more. So will you become his sons and daughters by adoption. And that all may be brought to this blessed and happy state, through obedience to the reproofs and instructions of God's holy spirit in your hearts, is the fervent travail and exercise of my heart for all mankind.

I also earnestly desire all those who take on them to be teachers, or preachers, amongst any religious society or congregation, solidly to consider
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how they stand approved in the sight of God in the first place, respecting their own conduct : how far they are good examples and true way-marks to their flock, and in a faithful discharge of their duty in advice and exhortation ; in endeavouring to restrain their children and those under their care from the follies and vanities herein mentioned ; so that they may stand clear of the blood of their children and families, as also of those congregations to which they belong ; which is a matter of great and serious importance. When I have passed along and beheld so much looseness, folly, and prophaneness, even sometimes on the first day of the week, called Sunday, some at foolish play in the street, others in the grave-yard, it has grieved and afflicted me so much, that I have been constrained to admonish them in divers places, and have said in my heart, that such who have undertaken to be teachers or preachers to the people, have great need to go to the several families, and advise both parents and children to refrain from all
such

such ungodly and unchristian practices. We ought to consider what it is that raises a nation, or a people, or a particular person, into favour with Almighty God: it is righteousness, justice, and a self-denying walking before God. But vanity, pride, and folly, and all unrighteousness, is a shame and reproach to any people professing the name of Christians.

From a friend and wellwisher to the souls of all mankind.

London, the 9th of the
third Month 1778.

THOMAS CARRINGTON.

From the Province of Pennsylvania in America.

